

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 410

By Staples

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor The Carpetbag Theatre, Inc., in Knoxville.

WHEREAS, it is with great pleasure that the members of this legislative body recognize those venerable organizations committed to bringing high-quality art to communities across this State, thereby enriching the lives of all citizens; and

WHEREAS, one such organization is The Carpetbag Theatre, Inc., of Knoxville, a first-rate professional, multigenerational ensemble company that has delighted audiences with entertaining and important performances for five decades; and

WHEREAS, The Carpet Bag Theatre was founded in 1969 by Wilmer F. Lucas and Cleo Martin Lucas, who brought together artists and community activists to ensure that the African-American community had an artistic voice in the telling of their stories and to provide a training ground for emerging artists; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, the theatre has focused on original work and has produced plays by lesser-known playwrights; the theatre set out to be highly mobile, not bound by traditional space conventions, and to that end, it has brought all forms of performances to Knoxville, including jazz, Avant Garde theater works, and dance; and

WHEREAS, with the addition of a new artistic director in 1974, The Carpetbag Theatre transitioned to a more collaborative approach to creating new work; the theatre began building a professional ensemble company, which subsequently toured original works. Today, the theatre's work is currently touring through several networks, including the New England Foundation for the Arts and the National Performance Network; and

WHEREAS, throughout its existence, The Carpetbag Theatre has been committed to arts and activism; it is responsible for helping found Alternate ROOTS (Regional Organization of

Theaters South), the KUUMBA Festival, and the NET (Network of Ensemble Theaters). The theatre also hosted An American Festival Project, a national initiative meant to engage underserved communities in community transformation through arts and culture; and

WHEREAS, The Carpetbag Theatre is one of six cohort partners in the LANE (Leveraging a Network for Equity) project, a four-year initiative designed to capitalize on projects from organizations of color and rural organizations that have been impacted by historic inequities in arts funding and practices of structural racism; and

WHEREAS, often recognized for its excellence in the arts and community involvement, The Carpetbag Theatre has received the OTTO Award, the Appalachian Legacy Award, and the Theater Company Longevity Award; the ensemble company has performed at such esteemed venues as the New Victory Theater and the Lincoln Center in New York City; and

WHEREAS, for fifty years, The Carpetbag Theatre has served communities by returning their stories to them with honesty, dignity, and concern for the aesthetic of that particular community, helping culturally specific communities redefine how they organize and tell their unique stories; and

WHEREAS, The Carpetbag Theatre is a true Tennessee treasure, and it is most fitting that the organization be recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize and honor The Carpetbag Theatre, Inc., for the good work it has done in Knoxville and the surrounding communities, extending our best wishes for its continued success in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.